

## REMARKS

In response to the final Office action mailed November 19, 2003, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. To further the prosecution of the application, claims 12 and 15 are canceled and claims 1, 13, 16 and 23 are amended. Accordingly, claims 1-11, 13, 14, 16-20 and 23 are pending, of which claims 1, 8, 13, 16 and 23 are in independent form. The application as presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

The undersigned Applicants' Attorney would like to thank the Examiner for participating in a telephonic interview regarding this application on March 5, 2004. During the interview, the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs were discussed. While the Examiner reserved the right to review the matter, the Examiner indicated that the suggested amendments and the arguments made during the interview should place the claims in allowable condition, and that she would consider them further upon reviewing this response.

Claims 1-7, 12-20 and 23 are rejected in the Office action under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Specifically, it was unclear to the Examiner where in the specification it is disclosed that the airflow moves along the length of the needle. The Examiner notes that page 8, line 18 discloses the airflow moving past the needle and that page 9, line 4 discloses the airflow pulling any residual material from the exterior surface of the needle.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to specify that the airflow moves "along the *exterior surface* of the liquid dispensing needle or pin . . . ." Clearly, in order to remove residual material from the exterior surface of the needle, airflow must move along the exterior surface of the needle. This language is also supported by FIG. 6A, which illustrates airflow 84 moving past the exterior surface of the needle 26. Thus, amended claim 1 is submitted as overcoming the rejection for failing to comply with the written description requirement by specifying language clearly supported in the specification and drawings.

Claims 2-7, which depend from claim 1, are submitted as being patentable for the same reasons given for claim 1.

Claim 13 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 12, but not the language objected to by the Examiner in the Office action. Specifically, claim 13

specifies “means for removing an amount of residual material from an exterior portion of the needle or pin without contacting the needle or pin by drawing air that moves proximal to the exterior portion of the needle or pin.” As with claim 1, the language used in amended claim 13 is clearly supported by the specification and drawings, and therefore submitted as overcoming the rejection set forth by the Examiner in the Office action.

Claim 14, which depends from claim 13, is submitted as being patentable for the same reasons given for claim 13.

Claim 16 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 15, but not the language objected to by the Examiner in the Office action. Specifically, claim 16 specifies “a cleaning system including at least one vacuum source for operatively removing residual material from the exterior of the at least one dispensing needle or pin by creating an airflow proximal to the exterior of the at least one dispensing needle or pin.” As with claims 1 and 13, the language used in amended claim 16 is clearly supported by the specification and drawings, and therefore submitted as overcoming the rejection set forth by the Examiner in the Office action.

Claims 17-20, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 16, are submitted as being patentable for the same reasons given for claim 16.

Claim 23 has been amended to comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, and is submitted as patentable for the same reasons given for these claims.

Claims 12-20 and 23 are rejected in the Office action under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Specifically, the Examiner is unclear as to what is meant by the term “in line” as used in claims 12, 15 and 23. Applicant has amended claim 23 and rewritten claims 13 and 16, which incorporate canceled claims 12 and 15, respectively, to eliminate any reference to this term. Accordingly, claims 13, 14, 16-20 and 23 are submitted as complying with the requirements set forth in 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

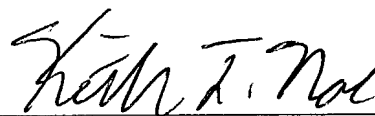
Additionally, claims 12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Blattner (U.S. Patent No. 5,525,515) and claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lopes (U.S. Patent No. 6,544,336) in view of Cavallaro (U.S. Patent No. 6,082,289). As referred to above, claims 12 and 15 are

canceled herein, and allowable claims 13 and 16 have been amended to include the limitations set forth in claims 12 and 15, respectively.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing, the application is believed to be in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding the application, he is invited to contact the Applicant's Attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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